

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Attorney Docket No.: 062940
Application No.: 10/590,821

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 18-20 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 7-9 and 15-17 are herein amended.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, 6, 10, 11 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Uhara et al (Pub No. 2004/0010113) as evidenced by Dunbar (PN 6,949,296). Favorable reconsideration of this rejection is earnestly solicited.

In the Office Action, it is asserted that Dunbar (PN 6,949,296) in view of Uhara (U.S. 2004/0010113) discloses that a gel film is carried through an oven with the ends fixed by tenter clips. (See Office Action, pg. 4; See Dunbar, Col. 6, lines 17-29; See Uhara, paragraphs 0075 and 0076). Based on this disclosure, the Examiner asserts that substantially no tension is applied in the TD direction.

Dunbar discloses that low tension processing is carried out as processing with minimal mechanical tension commonly used when processing gel film (See Dunbar, Col. 6, lines 17-20). However, Dunbar does not disclose transporting a film with both ends being fixed so that substantially no tension is applied in the TD direction, which is the novelty of Applicants' claimed invention. Dunbar describes their invention as "TD tension applied substantially only to the extent practical in conveying the film through the process" (See Dunbar, Col. 6, lines 37- 39), which is not the same as is claimed in the present application.

In the present invention, substantially no tension means that apart from the tension due to its own weight, tensile force due to mechanical handling is not applied to the film in the TD direction. (See Applicants' Specification, page 25, lines 6-8). That is, the film width between

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the fixed ends is longer than the distance between the fixed ends of the film, the distance between the gel film fixing sections, clips, in the production line. (See Applicants' Specification page 25, lines 6-10).

Applicants disclose two processes in their Specification. The first process involves both ends of the gel film are fixed so that the film is loosened, and then the film is transferred to step (C); and a second process in which after step (B), an operation for reducing the distance between the fixed ends is performed, and then the film is transferred to step (C) (See Applicants' claim 1 and Applicants' Specification, page 26, lines 13-24). This is in contrast to the disclosure of Dunbar, which does not disclose such a process for arranging so that substantially no tension is applied.

be stretched or relaxed by increasing or decreasing the distance between the clips at both edges of the film". (See Office Action, pg. 5; See Uhara, paragraph 0078).

While the Examiner included claim 6 in the rejection, it is presumed that the Examiner recognizes the description as corresponding to stretching the film in the TD direction, which is the substep (C-2) of Applicants' claimed invention, now incorporated into claim 1.

However, the description of Uhara is a mere general description and does not indicate which process includes stretching or relaxing. Even if the relaxing described in Uhara is carried out in the substep (C-1) of Applicants' claimed invention, Uhara does not disclose the substep (C-2) of stretching after the substep (C-1).

Therefore, unlike Applicants' claimed invention, neither Uhara nor Dunbar discloses or suggests a film having a molecular orientation axis controlled in the MD direction that can be obtained by carrying out the substep (C-1) and thereafter carrying out the substep (C-2).

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Thus, Applicants respectfully holds that the present invention is not obvious over Uhara or Dunbar. At this time, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3, 4, 5 and 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Uhara et al (Pub No. 2004/0010113) as evidenced by Dunbar (PN 6949296) as applied to claim 1 above.

The remarks above relating to claim 1 are intended to also address the §103(a) rejection based on Uhara as evidenced by Dunbar. Based on the remarks above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the obviousness rejection.

Claims 7-9 and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Uhara et al (Pub No. 2004/0010113) as evidenced by Dunbar (PN 6,949,296) as applied to claims 1 and 6 above, and further in view of Okahashi et al (PN 5,324,475).

Okahashi (US 5,324,475) discloses that a biaxially stretched polyimide film, having an excellent in-plane isotropy, is obtained by stretching the film in the MD direction and then stretching the film in the TD direction. Okahashi obtains a film having an excellent in-plane isotropy.

However, this is different from Applicants' claimed invention, where a film having a molecular orientation axis is controlled in the MD direction. Furthermore, Okahashi differs from Applicants' claimed invention in the method of transporting the film and does not describe fixing both ends of the film.

In addition there is no motivation for combining Okahara with Uhara. Also, Okahashi fails to specifically describe the substep (C-1) of the Applicants' claim 1.

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Thus, Applicants respectfully holds that the present invention is not obvious over Uhara as evidenced by Dunbar and further in view of Okahashi. At this time, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the obviousness rejection.

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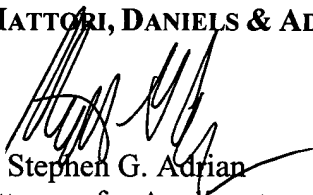
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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